

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 SWF-02 SR-02 ORM-03 AGR-20 EB-11

L-03 COME-00 SCS-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 HEW-08 INR-11

NSAE-00 PA-04 PRS-01 RSC-01 SCA-01 USIA-15 OMB-01

IO-14 NSC-07 SS-20 /164 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/PAB:DLBLAKEMORE:MRC

APPROVED BY NEA:ALATHERTON

AID:ASIA:SA:HREES (INFO)

NEA/PAB:PDCONSTABLE

NEA:LBLAINGEN

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R 102039Z AUG 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DACCA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, BG

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR ALI CALLS ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY
ATHERTON

REF: DACCA 3514; DACCA 3551; DACCA 3559

1. BENGALIEE AMBASSADOR ALI CALLED ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY
ATHERTON AUGUST 7 TO DISCUSS CURRENT FLOOD CRISIS IN
BANGLADESH AND APPEAL FOR EXTRAORDINARY US ASSISTANCE.

2. ALI APOLOGIZED FOR USING EVERY MEETING WITH ASSISTANT
SECRETARY TO ASK FOR SPECIAL US HELP FOR BANGLADESH, BUT
ASSERTED THAT IN CURRENT URGENT CRISIS SITUATION US IS
ONE OF FEW BDG CAN LOOK TO FOR NEEDED LEVELS OF ASSISTANCE.
HE SAID THAT ALL DISTRICTS OF THE COUNTRY EXCEPT THE
CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS HAVE BEEN HIT BY THE FLOODS, AND
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SOME 20 MILLION PEOPLE HAVE BEEN AFFECTED. WHILE THE

BDG HAS BEEN MOBILIZED TO THE GREATEST POSSIBLE EXTENT TO DEAL WITH THE DISASTER, AVAILABLE RESOURCES ARE INADEQUATE TO COPE WITH THE SITUATION IN VIEW OF THE PARLOUS STATE OF THE BENGAL EEE ECONOMY EVEN BEFORE THE FLOODS. HE ASSERTED THAT HALF OF THE AUS CROP HAS BEEN LOST ALREADY, AND THERE IS GREAT UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THIS YEAR'S AMAN CROP.

3. ATHERTON EXPRESSED THE DEEP REGRET OF THE USG AT THIS LATEST TURN OF EVENTS, AND ASSURED ALI THAT THE EMBASSY IN DACCA IS KEEPING US WELL INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS. HE STRESSED THAT A KEY PROBLEM IN DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATE USG RESPONSE IS THE LACK OF INFORMATION, AND URGED THAT THE BDG COOPERATE IN THIS AREA WITH EMBASSY DACCA TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT ALI GET IN TOUCH WITH THE AID DISASTER RELIEF CENTER TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO VOLAGS FOR ASSISTANCE. ATHERTON ALSO POINTED OUT THAT DESPITE THE SEVERITY OF THE SHORT RANGE CRISIS, WE SHOULD ALL BEAR IN MIND THE NEED FOR LONGER RANGE STRUCTURAL REFORMS, PARTICULARLY IN THE AREA OF FOOD PRODUCTION. ATHERTON AGREED WITH AMB. ALI THAT GREATEST NEED WILL BE FOR FOODGRAINS IN AFTERMATH OF FLOOD. HE ASSURED AMBASSADOR THAT USG IS CONTINUING TO GIVE BDG FOOD NEEDS PRIORITY ATTENTION WITHIN LIMITS OF OUR OWN SUPPLY CONSTRAINTS.

4. AMB. ALI ALSO DELIVERED LETTER FOR SECRETARY DESCRIBING FLOOD SITUATION AND REITERATING APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING 500,000 TONS OF WHEAT AND 20,000 TONS OF VEGOIL UNDER TITLE II.

5. DEPT. GREATLY APPRECIATES THE DETAILED REPORTING ON THE FLOOD SITUATION CONTAINED IN THE REFERENCED MESSAGES, WHICH WERE OF GREAT ASSISTANCE IN MEETING WITH AMB. ALI. KISSINGER

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